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BRITISH SETTLEMENTS

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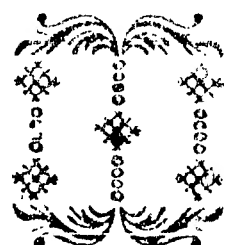
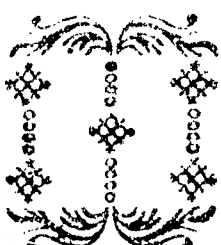
'S L A V E - K E E P I N G.

Benjamin Rush

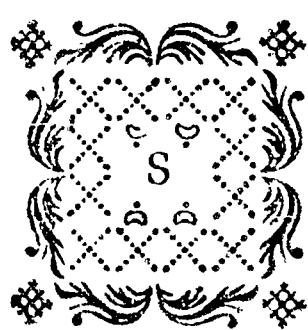
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M.DCC.LXXIII.



AN ADDRESS, &c.



SO much hath been said upon the subject of Slave-keeping, that an apology may be required for this address. The only one I shall offer is, that the evil still continues. This may in part be owing to the great attachment we have to our own interest, and in part to the subject not yet being fully exhausted. The design of the following address is to sum up the leading arguments against it, several of which have not been urged by any of those authors who have written upon it.

Without entering into the history of the facts which relate to the slave trade, I shall proceed immediately to combat the principal arguments which are used to support it.

And here I need hardly say any thing in favour of the intellects of the Negroes, or of their capacities

capacities for virtue and happiness, although these have been supposed by some to be inferior to those of the inhabitants of Europe. The accounts which travellers give us of their ingenuity, humanity, and strong attachment to their parents, relations, friends and country, show us that they are equal to the Europeans, when we allow for the diversity of temper and genius which is occasioned by climate. We have many well attested anecdotes of as sublime and disinterested virtue among them as ever adorned a Roman or a Christian character*. But we are to distinguish between an African in his own country, and an African in a state of slavery in America. Slavery is so foreign to the human mind, that the moral faculties, as well as those of the understanding are debased, and rendered torpid by it. All the vices which are charged upon the Negroes in the southern colonies

* See SPECTATOR, Vol. I. No. 11.

There is now in the town of Boston a free Negro Girl, about eighteen years of age, who has been but nine years in the country, whose singular genius and accomplishments are such as not only do honour to her sex, but to human nature. Several of her poems have been printed, and read with pleasure by the public.

colonies and the West-Indies, such as Idleness, Treachery, Theft, and the like, are the genuine offspring of slavery, and serve as an argument to prove that they were not intended by Providence for it.

Nor let it be said, in the present age, that their black colour, (as it is commonly called) either subjects them to, or qualifies them for slavery *. The vulgar notion of their being

* Montesquieu, in his Spirit of Laws, treats this argument, with the ridicule it deserves :

“ WERE I to vindicate our right to make slaves of the Negroes, these should be my arguments.

“ The Europeans having extirpated the Americans, were obliged to make slaves of the Africans, for clearing such vast tracts of land.

“ Sugar would be too dear, if the plants which produce it were cultivated by any other than slaves.

“ These creatures are all over black, and with such a flat nose, that they can scarcely be pitied.

“ It is hardly to be believed that God, who is a wise being, should place a soul, especially a good soul, in such a black ugly body.

“ The Negroes prefer a glass necklace to that gold, which polite nations so highly value : can there be a greater proof of their wanting common sense ?

“ It is impossible for us to suppose these creatures to be men, because, allowing them to be men, a suspicion would follow, that we ourselves are not Christians.”

ing descended from Cain, who was supposed to have been marked with this colour, is too absurd to need a refutation.---Without enquiring into the cause of this blackness, I shall only add upon this subject, that so far from being a curse, it subjects the Negroes to no inconveniences ; but, on the contrary, qualifies them for that part of the globe in which Providence has placed them. The ravages of heat, diseases and time, appear less in their faces than in a white one ; and when we exclude variety of colour from our ideas of beauty, they may be said to possess every thing necessary to constitute it in common with the white people *.

It has been urged by the inhabitants of the Sugar Islands and South Carolina, that it would be impossible to carry on the manufactories of sugar, rice, and indigo, without Negro slaves. No manufactory can ever be of consequence enough to society, to admit the least violation of
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* “*Quamvis ille niger, quamvis tu candidus esses.*

----- *Nimum ne crede colori.*

Alba Ligustra cadunt ; Vaccinia nigra leguntur.”

VIRGIL.

“*I am black,---but comely.*”

SOME OF SOLOMON.

the laws of justice or humanity. But I am far from thinking the arguments used in favour of employing Negroes for the cultivation of these articles, should have any weight.---M. Le Poivre, late Envoy from the King of France, to the King of Cochin-China, and now Intendant of the Isles of Bourbon and Mauritius, in his observations upon the manners and arts of the various nations in Africa and Asia, speaking of the culture of sugar in Cochin-China, has the following remarks---“ It is worthy observation too, that the sugar cane is there cultivated by free men, and all the process of preparation and refining, the work of free hands. Compare then the price of the Cochin-Chinese production with the same commodity which is cultivated and prepared by the wretched slaves of our European colonies, and judge if, to procure sugar from our colonies, it was necessary to authorize by law the slavery of the unhappy Africans transported to America *. From what

I have

* White sugar of the best quality, is sold for three dollars the Cochin-China quintal, which weighs from 150 to 200 pounds French. Ninety-one pounds eight ounces French, makes one hundred pounds English.

I have observed at Cochin-China, I cannot entertain a doubt, but that our West-India colonies, had they been distributed without reservation amongst a free people, would have produced double the quantity that is now procured from the labour of the unfortunate Negroes.

“ What advantage, then, has accrued to Europe, civilized as it is, and thoroughly versed in the laws of nature, and the rights of mankind, by legally authorizing in our colonies, the daily outrages against human nature, permitting them to debase man almost below the level of the beasts of the field? These slavish laws have proved as opposite to its interest, as they are to its honour, and to the laws of humanity. This remark I have often made.

“ Liberty and property form the basis of abundance, and good agriculture : I never observed it to flourish where those rights of mankind were not firmly established. The earth, which multiplies her productions with a kind of profusion, under the hands of the free-born labourer, seems to shrink into barrenness under the sweat of the slave. Such is the will of the great Author of our nature, who has created man
free,

free, and assigned to him the earth, that he might cultivate his possession with the sweat of his brow; but still should enjoy his liberty."

Now, if the plantations in the islands and the southern colonies were more limited, and free men only employed in working them, the general product would be greater, although the profits to individuals would be less,---a circumstance this, which by diminishing opulence in a few, would suppress luxury and vice, and promote that equal distribution of property, which appears best calculated to promote the welfare of society *.---I know it has been said by some, that none but the natives of warm climates

B could

* From this account of Le Poivre's, we may learn the futility of the argument, that the number of vessels in the sugar trade, serve as a nursery for seamen, and that the Negroes consume a large quantity of the manufactures of Great-Britain. If free men only were employed in the islands, a double quantity of sugar would be made, and of course twice the number of vessels and seamen would be made use of in the trade. One free man consumes yearly four times the quantity of British goods that a Negroe does. Slaves multiply in all countries slowly. Free men multiply in proportion as slavery is discouraged. It is to be hoped therefore, that motives of policy will at last induce Britons to give up a trade, which those of justice and humanity cannot prevail upon them to relinquish.

could undergo the excessive heat and labour of the West-India islands. But this argument is founded upon an error ; for the reverse of this is true. I have been informed by good authority, that one European who escapes the first or second year, will do twice the work, and live twice the number of years that an ordinary Negro man will do : nor need we be surprized at this, when we hear, that such is the natural fertility of soil, and so numerous the spontaneous fruits of the earth in the interior parts of Africa, that the natives live in plenty at the expence of little or no labour, which, in warm climates, has ever been found to be incompatible with long life and happiness. Future ages, therefore, when they read the accounts of the slave trade (if they do not regard them as fabulous) will be at a loss which to condemn most, our folly or our guilt, in abetting this direct violation of the laws of Nature and Religion.

But there are some who have gone so far as to say, that slavery is not repugnant to the genius of Christianity, and that it is not forbidden in any part of the Scriptures*. Natural
and

* This opinion has been lately supported in a Treatise upon the Ranks of Society, by JOHN MILLAR, L. L. D. Professor of Law in the University of Glasgow.

and Revealed Religion always speak the same things, although the latter delivers its precepts with a louder, and more distinct voice than the former. If it could be proved that no testimony was to be found in the Bible against a practice so pregnant with evils of the most destructive tendency to society, it would be sufficient to overthrow its divine original. We read, it is true, of Abraham's having slaves born in his house; and we have reason to believe, that part of the riches of the Patriarchs consisted in them; but we can no more infer the lawfulness of the practice, from the short account which the Jewish historian gives us of these facts, than we can vindicate telling a lie, because Rahab is not condemned for it in the account which is given of her deceiving the King of Jericho*. We read that some of the same men indulged

B 2.

themselves

* 3 And the King of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country.

4 And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were.

5 And it came to pass *about the time* of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went, I wot not; pursue after them quickly for ye shall overtake them.

themselves in a plurality of wives, without any strictures being made upon their conduct for it; and yet no one will pretend to say, that this is not forbidden in many parts of the Old Testament *. But we are told the Jews kept the Heathens in perpetual bondage †. The design of Providence in permitting this evil, was probably to prevent the Jews from marrying among strangers, to which their intercourse with them upon any other footing than that of slaves, would naturally have inclined them ‡. Had this taken place ---their national religion would have been corrupted---they would have contracted all their vices §, and

6 But she brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof. JOSHUA, Chap. II.

* Prov. v. 18, 19, 20. † Levit. xxv. 44, 45, 46.

‡ That marriage with strangers was looked upon as a crime among the Jews, we learn from Ezra ix. 1 to 6, also from the whole of Chapter x.

§ May not this be the reason why swines' flesh was forbidden to the Jews, lest they should be tempted to eat with their Heathen neighbours, who used it in diet? This appears more probable than the opinion of Doctor MEAD, who supposes that it has a physical tendency to produce the leprosy; or that of VOLTAIRE, who asserts that the Jews learned to abstain from this flesh from the Ægyptians, who valued the hog almost to a degree of idolatry for its great usefulness in rooting

and the intention of Providence in keeping them a distinct people, in order to accomplish the promise made to Abraham, that "in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed," would have been defeated; so that the descent of the MESSIAH from ABRAHAM, could not have been traced, and the divine commission of the Son of God, would have wanted one of its most powerful arguments to support it. But with regard to their own countrymen, it is plain, perpetual slavery was not tolerated. Hence, at the end of seven years, or in the year of the jubilee, all the Hebrew slaves were set at liberty *, and, it was held unlawful to detain them in servitude longer than that time, except by their own consent

rooting up the ground. What makes this conjecture the more probable is, that the Jews abstained from several other kinds of flesh used by their Heathen neighbours, which have never been accused of bringing on diseases of the skin, and which were used constantly in diet by the Egyptians. The account which Tacitus gives of the diet and customs of the Jews, is directly to our purpose----

"Bos quoque immolantur, quem Ægyptii apin colunt. Ægyptii pleraque animalia, Effigiesque compositas venerantur; Judæi mente sola, unumque numen intelligunt. Separati Epulis, discreti Cubilibus, Alienarum Concubitu abstinēt."

HISTOR. LIB. V.

* Deuteronomy xxiv. 7.

sent *. But if, in the partial revelation which GOD made, of his will to the Jews, we find such testimonies against slavery, what may we not expect from the Gospel, the design of which was to abolish all distinctions of name and country. While the Jews thought they complied with the precepts of the law, in confining the love of their neighbour “to the children of their own people,” Christ commands us to look upon all mankind, even our enemies †, as our neighbours and brethren, and, “in all things, to do unto them whatever we would wish they should do unto us.” He tells us further, that his “kingdom is not of this world,” and therefore constantly avoids saying any thing that might interfere directly with the Roman or Jewish governments: so that altho’ he does not call upon masters to emancipate their slaves, or upon slaves to assert that liberty wherewith God and Nature had made them free, yet there is scarcely a parable or a sermon in the whole history of his life, but what contains the strongest arguments

* Deut. xv. 12.

† This is strongly inculcated in the story of the good Samaritan, Luke x.

ments against slavery. Every prohibition of covetousness---intemperance---pride---uncleanness---theft---and murder, which he delivered,---every lesson of meekness, humility, forbearance, charity, self-denial, and brotherly love, which he taught, are levelled against this evil;---for slavery, while it includes all the former vices, necessarily excludes the practice of all the latter virtues, both from the master and the slave.---Let such, therefore, who vindicate the traffic of buying and selling souls, seek some modern system of religion to support it, and not presume to sanctify their crimes by attempting to reconcile it to the sublime and perfect religion of the Great Author of Christianity *.

There

* The influence of Christianity in putting a stop to slavery, appears in the first christian Emperor, Constantine, who commanded, under the severest penalties, all such as had slaves, to set them at liberty. He afterwards contrived to render the manumission of them much easier than formerly, for instead of recurring to the forms prescribed by the Roman laws, which were attended with great difficulties and a considerable expence, he gave leave to masters to enfranchise their slaves in the presence of a Bishop, or a Minister and a christian Assembly.

Universal History, Vol. xv. P. 574, 577.

Dr. ROBERTSON, in treating of those causes which weakened

There are some amongst us who cannot help allowing the force of our last argument, but plead as a motive for importing and keeping slaves, that they become acquainted with the principles of the religion of our country.---This is like justifying a highway robbery, because part of the money acquired in this manner was appropriated to some religious use.---Christianity will

ed the feudal system, and finally abolished slavery in Europe, in the 14th century, has the following observations----

“The gentle spirit of the Christian Religion, together with the doctrines which it teaches, concerning the original equality of mankind, as well as the impartial eye with which the Almighty regards men of every condition, and admits them to a participation of his benefits, are inconsistent with servitude. But in this, as in many other instances, considerations of interest and the maxims of false policy, led men to a conduct inconsistent with their principles. They were so sensible, however, of the inconsistency, that to set their fellow Christians at liberty from servitude was deemed an act of piety highly meritorious and acceptable to Heaven. The humane spirit of the Christian religion, struggled with the maxims and manners of the world, and contributed more than any other circumstance, to introduce the practice of manumission. The formality of manumission was executed in a church or a religious assembly.---The person to be set free, was led round the great altar, with a torch in his hand, he took hold of the horns of the altar, and there the solemn words conferring liberty, were pronounced.”

CHARLES V. Historical Illustrations. Note xx.

will never be propagated by any other methods than those employed by Christ and his Apostles. Slavery is an engine as little fitted for that purpose as fire or the sword. A Christian slave is a contradiction in terms *. But if we enquire into the methods employed for converting the Negroes to Christianity, we shall find the means suited to the end proposed. In many places Sunday is appropriated to work for themselves. Reading and writing are discouraged among them. A belief is even inculcated among some, that they have no souls. In a word, every attempt to instruct or convert them, has been constantly opposed by their masters. Nor has the example of their Christian masters any tendency to prejudice them in favour of our religion. How

C often

* St. Paul's letter to Philemon, in behalf of Onesimus, is said by some to contradict this assertion, but, if viewed properly, will rather support it. He desires Philemon to receive him "not as a servant, but as a brother beloved," "as his son---and part of himself." In other parts of his writing, he obliquely hints at the impossibility of uniting the duties of a Christian, with the offices of a slave. "Ye are bought with a price, be not therefore the servants of men." 1 Corinth. vii. 23. Had he lived to see Christianity established by law, in the countries where he preached, with what a torrent of christian eloquence may we not suppose he would have declaimed against slavery!

often do they betray, in their sudden transports of anger and resentment, (against which there is no restraint provided towards their Negroes) the most violent degrees of passion and fury !--- What luxury---what ingratitude to the Supreme Being---what impiety in their ordinary conversation do some of them discover in the presence of their slaves ! I say nothing of the dissolution of marriage vows, or the entire abolition of matrimony, which the frequent sale of them introduces, and which are directly contrary to the law of Nature and the principles of Christianity. Would to Heaven I could here conceal the shocking violations of chastity, which some of them are obliged to undergo, without daring to complain. Husbands have been forced to prostitute their wives, and mothers their daughters, to gratify the brutal lust of a master. This---all this is practised---Blush---ye impure and hardened monsters, while I repeat it---by men who call themselves Christians !

But further---It has been said, that we do a kindness to the Negroes by bringing them to America, as we thereby save their lives, which had been forfeited by their being conquered in

war

war *. Let such as prefer or inflict slavery rather than death, disown their being descended from or connected with our mother countries.--- But it will be found, upon enquiry, that many are stolen or seduced from their friends, who have never been conquered; and it is plain, from the testimony of historians and travellers, that wars were uncommon among them, until the Christians who began the slave trade, stirred up the different nations to fight against each other. Sooner let them imbrue their hands in each other's blood, or condemn one another to perpetual slavery, than the name of one Christi-

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an,

* "From the right of killing in case of conquest, politicians have drawn that of reducing to slavery; a consequence as ill grounded as the principle.

"There is no such thing as a right of reducing people to slavery, but when it becomes necessary for the preservation of the conquest; preservation but not servitude, is the end of conquest, though servitude may happen sometimes to be a necessary means of preservation.

"Even in that case it is contrary to the nature of things, that the slavery should be perpetual. The people enslaved ought to be rendered capable of becoming subjects."

Montesquieu's Spirit of Laws, Book x. Chap. 3.

"*Servi autem ex eo appellati sunt, quod imperatores captivos vendere, ac per hoc servare, nec occidere solent. Servitus est constitutio Juris Gentium, qua quis dominio alieno CONTRA NATURAM subjicitur.*----

Justinian, Institut. L. i. Tit. 3.

an, or one American be stained by the perpetration of such enormous crimes. Nor let it be urged, that by treating slaves well, we render their situation happier in this country than it was in their own,---Slavery and vice are connected together, and the latter is always a source of misery. Besides, by the greatest humanity we can show them, we only lessen, but do not remove the crime, for the injustice of it continues the same. The laws of retribution are so strongly inculcated by the moral Governor of the world, that even the ox is entitled to his reward for "treading the corn." How great then must be the amount of that injustice which deprives so many of our fellow creatures of the just reward of their labour * !

But it will be asked here, What steps shall we take to remedy this evil, and what shall we do with those slaves we have already in this country ? This is indeed a most difficult question.

* The debt of a master to a negro man whose work is valued at ten pounds sterling a year, deducting forty shillings a year, which is the most that is laid out for their clothing in the West-Indies, amounts, in the course of twenty years, to £.160 sterling. The victuals are included in the above wages. These consist chiefly of vegetables, and are very cheap.

tion. But let every man contrive to answer it for himself. If you possessed an estate which was bequeathed to you by your ancestors, and were afterwards convinced that it was the just property of another man, would you think it right to continue in the possession of it? Would you not give it up immediately to the lawful owner? The voice of all mankind would mark him for a villain who would refuse to comply with this demand of justice. And is not keeping a slave, after you are convinced of the unlawfulness of it, a crime of the same nature? All the money you save, or acquire by their labour is stolen from them; and however plausible the excuse may be, that you form to reconcile it to your consciences, yet be assured, that your crime stands registered in the court of Heaven as a breach of the eighth commandment.

The first step to be taken to put a stop to slavery in this country, is to leave off importing slaves. For this purpose let our Assemblies unite in petitioning the King and Parliament to dissolve the African Company *. It is by this
incorporated

* The Virginia Assembly, which had the honour of being first on the Continent in opposing the American Stamp-Act

incorporated band of robbers, that the trade has been chiefly carried on to America. We have the more reason to expect relief from an application at this juncture, as, by a late decision in favour of a Virginia slave, at Westminster-Hall, the clamours of the whole nation are raised against them. Let such of our countrymen as engage in the slave trade, be shunned as the greatest enemies to our country, and let the vessels which bring the slaves to us, be avoided, as if they bore in them the seeds of that forbidden fruit, whose baneful taste destroyed both the natural and moral world.---As for the Negroes among us, who, from having acquired all the low vices of slavery, or who, from age or infirmities are unfit to be set at liberty, I would propose, for the good of society, that they should continue the property of those with whom they grew old, or from whom they contracted those vices and infirmities. But let the young Negroes be educated in the principles of virtue and religion---let them be taught to read and write---and afterwards instructed in some business, whereby

Act by their resolves, have lately set another laudable example to the Colonies in being the first in petitioning for a redress of this grievance. For this Petition *vide* page 33.

whereby they may be able to maintain themselves. Let laws be made to limit the time of their servitude, and to entitle them to all the privileges of free-born British subjects. At any rate, let retribution be done to God and to society *.

And

* A worthy friend of mine has favoured me with the following Extract of a letter from GRANVILLE SHARP, Esq: of London.

“ I A M told of some Regulations that have taken place in the Spanish Colonies, which do the Spaniards much honour, and are certainly worthy our imitation, in case we should not be so happy as to obtain an entire abolition of slavery, and probably you would find many American subjects that would be willing to promote such Regulations, though the same people would strenuously oppose the scheme of a total abolition of slavery. I have never seen an account of the Spanish Regulations in writing, but I understand that they are to the following effect. As soon as a slave is landed, his name, price, &c. are registered in a public office, and the master is obliged to allow him one working day in every week to himself, besides Sundays, so that if the slave chuses to work for his master on that day, he receives the wages of a free man for it, and whatever he gains by his labour on that day, is so secured to him by law, that the master cannot deprive him of it. This is certainly a considerable step towards the abolishing absolute slavery. As soon as the slave is able to purchase another working day, the master is obliged to sell it to him at a proportionable price, viz. one-fifth part of his original cost: and so likewise the remaining four days

And now my countrymen, what shall I add more to rouse up your indignation against slave-keeping. Consider the many complicated crimes it involves in it. Think of the bloody wars which are fomented by it, among the African nations, or if these are too common to affect you, think of the pangs which attend the dissolution of the ties of nature in those who are stolen from their relations. Think of the many thousands who perish by sickness, melancholy and suicide, in their voyages to America. Pursue the poor devoted

days at the same rate, as soon as the slave is able to redeem them, after which he is absolutely free. This is such an encouragement to industry, that even the most indolent are tempted to exert themselves. Men who have thus worked out their freedom are inured to the labour of the country, and are certainly the most useful subjects that a colony can acquire. Regulations might be formed upon the same plan to encourage the industry of slaves that are already imported into the colonies, which would teach them how to maintain themselves and be as useful, as well as less expensive to the planter. They would by such means become members of society, and have an interest in the welfare of the community, which would add greatly to the strength and security of each colony; whereas, at present, many of the planters are in continual danger of being cut off by their slaves.---A fate which, they but too justly deserve!"

voted victims to one of the West India islands, and see them exposed there to public sale. Hear their cries, and see their looks of tenderness at each other upon being separated.---Mothers are torn from their daughters, and brothers from brothers, without the liberty of a parting embrace. Their master's name is now marked upon their breasts with a red hot iron. But let us pursue them into a sugar field, and behold a scene still more affecting than this---See the poor wretches with what reluctance they take their instruments of labour into their hands! ---Some of them overcome with heat and sickness, seek to refresh themselves by a little rest. ---But, behold an Overseer approaches them. ---In vain they sue for pity.---He lifts up his whip, while streams of blood follow every stroke. Neither age nor sex are spared.---Me-thinks one of them is a woman far advanced in her pregnancy.---At a little distance from these, behold a man, who from his countenance and deportment, appears as if he was descended from illustrious ancestors.---Yes.---He is the son of a Prince, and was torn, by a stratagem, from an amiable wife and two young children---Mark

his fallen looks !---Now he bids defiance to the tyranny of his master, and in an instant plunges a knife into his heart---But, let us return from this scene, and see the various modes of arbitrary punishments inflicted upon them by their masters. Behold one covered with stripes, into which melted wax is poured---another tied down to a block or a stake---a third suspended in the air by his thumbs---a fourth obliged to sit or stand upon red hot iron---a fifth---I cannot relate it.---Where now is law or justice ? ---Let us fly to them to step in for their relief. ---Alas !---The one is silent, and the other denounces more terrible punishments upon them. Let us attend the place appointed for inflicting the penalties of the law. See here one without a limb, whose only crime was an attempt to regain his liberty---another led to a gallows for eating a morsel of bread, to which his labour gave him a better title than his master---a third famishing on a gibbet---a fourth, in a flame of fire !---his shrieks pierce the very heavens.---O ! God ! Where is thy vengeance ! O ! Humanity---Justice---Liberty---Religion !---Where---where are ye fled.---

This

This is no exaggerated picture. It is taken from real life.---Before I conclude I shall take the liberty of addressing several classes of my countrymen in behalf of our brethren (for by that name may we now call them) who are in a state of slavery among us.

In the first place, let **MAGISTRATES** both supreme and inferior, exert the authority they are invested with, in suppressing this evil. Let them discountenance it by their example, and show a readiness to concur in every measure proposed to remedy it.

Let **LEGISLATORS** reflect upon the trust reposed in them. Let their laws be made after the Spirit of Religion---Liberty---and our most excellent English Constitution. You cannot show your attachment to your King or your love to your country better, than by suppressing an evil which endangers the dominions of the former, and will in time destroy the liberty of the latter*. Population,

D 2.

and

* By a late calculation, it appears that there are eight hundred and fifty thousand Negro slaves in the British colonies and islands. From the number and burden of ships, which are sent from England to Africa for slaves, we can, with a good deal of certainty, conclude, that there are not
1015

and the accession of strangers, in which the riches of all countries consist, can only flourish in proportion as slavery is discouraged. Extend the privileges we enjoy, to every human creature born among us, and let not the Journals of our Assemblies be disgraced with the records of laws, which allow exclusive privileges to men of one colour, in preference to another *.

Ye

less than one hundred thousand of them imported into America every year. By particular enquiry it was found, that one hundred and four thousand were imported in the year 1768.

“ In moderate governments, it is a point of the highest importance, that there should not be a great number of slaves. The political liberty of those states adds to the value of civil liberty ; and he who is deprived of the latter, is also deprived of the former. He sees the happiness of a society, of which he is not so much as a member ; he sees the security of others fenced by laws, himself without so much protection. He sees his master has a soul, that can enlarge itself ; while his own is constrained to submit to almost continual depression. Nothing more assimilates a man to a beast, than living among free men, himself a slave. Such people as these, are the natural enemies of a society, and their number must be dangerous.”

Spirit of Laws, Book xv. Chapt. 12.

* The alterations in the laws in favour of Negroes, should be gradual,--till the evil habits they have acquir-

ed

Ye men of SENSE and VIRTUE---Ye ADVOCATES for American Liberty, rouse up and espouse the cause of Humanity and general Liberty. Bear a testimony against a vice which degrades human nature, and dissolves that universal tie of benevolence which should connect all the children of men together in one great family. The plant of Liberty is of so tender a nature, that it cannot thrive long in the neighbourhood of slavery. Remember the eyes of all Europe are fixed upon you, to preserve an assylum for freedom in this country, after the last pillars of it are fallen in every other quarter of the globe.

But chiefly---ye MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL, whose dominion over the principles and actions of men is so universally acknowledged and felt,---ye who estimate the worth of your fellow creatures by their immortality, and therefore must look upon all mankind as equal; let your zeal keep pace with your opportunities

ed by slavery, are eradicated. There are several privileges, however, which might be extended to them immediately, without the least risk to society, in particular, that inestimable one of trial by JURIES.

opportunities to put a stop to slavery. While you enforce the duties of "tithe and cummin," neglect not the weightier laws of justice and humanity. Slavery is an hydra sin, and includes in it every violation of the precepts of the Law and the Gospel. In vain will you command your flocks to offer up the incense of faith and charity, while they continue to mingle the sweat and blood of Negro slaves with their sacrifices. If the blood of Abel cried aloud for vengeance : If, under the Jewish dispensation, cities of refuge could not screen the deliberate murderer if even manslaughter required sacrifices to expiate it, and if a single murder so seldom escapes with impunity in any civilized country, what may you not say against that trade, or those manufactures---or laws*, which

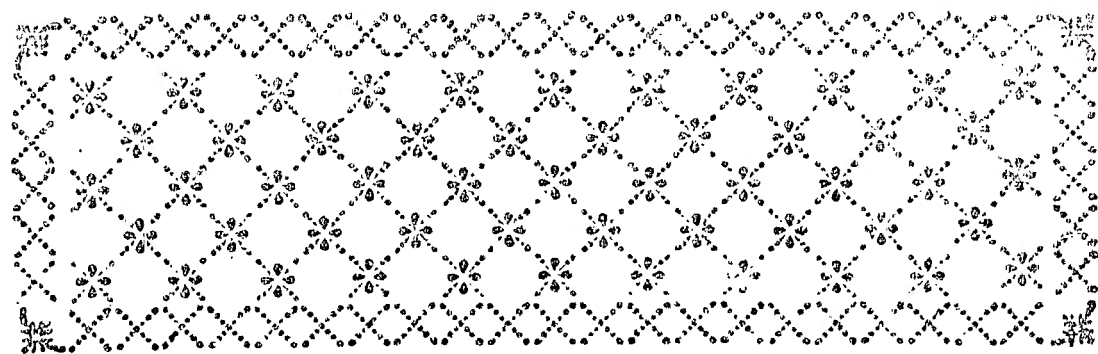
* "If any Negro or other slave under punishment by his master, or his order, for running away, or any other crimes or misdemeanors towards his said master, unfortunately shall suffer in life or member, no person whatever shall be liable to any fine; but if any man shall of wantonness, or only of bloody mindedness, or cruel intention, wilfully kill a Negro, or other slave of his own, he shall deliver into the public treasury fifteen pounds sterling, and not be liable to any other punishment, or forfeiture for the same."

Laws of Barbados, Act 329.

which destroy the lives of so many thousands of our fellow creatures every year?--- If in the Old Testament “God swears by his holiness, and by the excellency of Jacob, that the earth shall tremble, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein for the iniquity of those who oppress the poor and crush the needy,” “who buy the poor with silver, and the needy with a pair of shoes*,” what judgments may you not denounce upon those who continue to perpetrate these crimes, after the more full discovery which God has made of the law of equity in the New Testament. Put them in mind of the rod which was held over them a few years ago in the Stamp and Revenue Acts. Remember that national crimes require national punishments, and without declaring what punishment awaits this evil, you may venture to assure them, that it cannot pass with impunity, unless God shall cease to be just or merciful.

* Amos iv. 1, 2.---viii. 6, 7.

EXTRACT



E X T R A C T

F R O M T H E

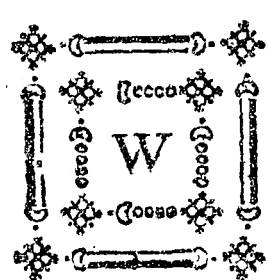
M I N U T E S

O F T H E

House of BURGESSES in VIRGINIA.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 1772.

MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN,



E, your Majesty's dutiful and
loyal subjects, the Burgesses of
Virginia, now met in General As-
sembly, beg leave with all hu-
mility, to approach your Royal presence.

E

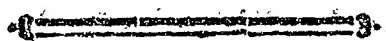
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THE many instances of your Majesty's benevolent intentions, and most gracious disposition, to promote the prosperity and happiness of your subjects in the Colonies, encourage us to look up to the throne, and implore your Majesty's paternal assistance, in averting a calamity of a most alarming nature : The importation of Slaves into the Colonies, from the coast of Africa, hath been long considered as a trade of great inhumanity, and under its present encouragement, we have too much reason to fear, will endanger the very existence of your Majesty's American dominions.

WE are sensible, that some of your Majesty's subjects in Great Britain, may reap emoluments from this sort of traffic ; but, when we consider that it greatly retards the settlement of the Colonies, with more useful inhabitants, and may, in time, have the most destructive influence, we presume to hope, that the interest of a few will be disregarded, when placed in competition with the security and happiness of such numbers of your Majesty's dutiful

dutiful and loyal subjects. Deeply impressed with these sentiments, we most humbly beseech your Majesty, to remove all those restraints on your Majesty's Governor of this Colony, which inhibit their assenting to such laws as might check so very pernicious a commerce.

YOUR Majesty's ancient Colony and Dominion of Virginia, hath at all times, and upon every occasion, been entirely devoted to your Majesty's sacred person and government, and we cannot forego this opportunity of renewing those assurances, of the truest loyalty and warmest affection, which we have so often, with the greatest sincerity, given to the best of Kings, whose wisdom and goodness we esteem the surest pledge of the happiness of all his people.



RESOLVED, *Nemine contra dicente*, That the House doth agree with the Committee, in the said Address, to be presented to his Majesty.

RESOLVED,

RESOLVED, That an Address be presented to his Excellency the Governor, to desire, that he will be pleased to transmit the Address to his Majesty, and to support it in such manner, as he shall think most likely to promote the desirable end proposed.

T H E E N D.

